

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-5 will have been amended. In addition, new dependent claims 6, 7, and 8 will have been submitted for consideration by the Examiner.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by MCNEELY (U.S. Patent No. 4,302,175). Applicants respectfully traverse.

MCNEELY discloses an apparatus for molding recorded discs and includes a pair of mold plates having opposed surfaces on which stampers can be mounted. As shown in Fig. 1, MCNEELY includes an upper stamper 28 that has a central opening 32 therethrough and a conical portion 34 that projects from the plane of the stamper, around the central opening 32 (col. 2, lines 11-13). That is, the upper stamper 28 of MCNEELY has a conical portion 34 around its inner periphery. Further, conical surface 48 of the flange 46 engages the conical portion 34 of the stamper 28 and clamps it against the conical surface of recess 24 to secure an inner edge of the stamper 28 to upper mold plate 12 (col. 2, lines 30-34). Essentially, MCNEELY requires a conic projection on the stamper to facilitate its securement to the upper mold plate 12. This is not the case with the present invention.

The claims of the present invention recite a flat, disk-shaped stamper. That is, the stamper of the present invention is certainly distinct from the stamper of MCNEELY, which requires a conical portion (the bent and upwardly projecting portion in the sectional view of Fig. 1) to facilitate securement to the mold plate. Accordingly, MCNEELY is submitted to be deficient with respect to the presently recited claims.

Applicants do not acquiesce in the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, but have amended the claims solely to clarify the invention and to expedite prosecution. Also, Applicants have made a number of minor, non-limiting changes to the claims. In addition, Applicants have submitted new dependent claims 6, 7, and 8, which recite further features of the present invention. New claims 6, 7, and 8 add no prohibited new matter and recite features not taught by the prior art.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of the claims, as well as an indication of the allowability of claims 1-8.

Lastly, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for attaching the Notices of References Cited and PTO-1449 form, the form having been appropriately initialed by the Examiner to indicate consideration of the document. In addition, Applicants thank the Examiner for his indication that the drawings filed on March 23, 2004 are acceptable.

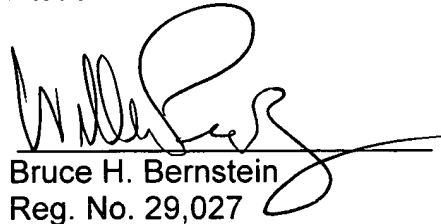
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that he has now done so. Applicant has amended the claims and has argued their patentability over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests an indication as to the allowability of all of the pending claims in the present application.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,  
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